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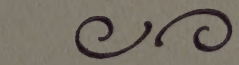
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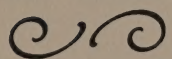
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Foreword

It is to be remembered that the term "Forks of Brandywine" does not refer to the particular geographical point at which the east and west branches of the stream unite. In accordance with ancient custom, it applies to the entire section (in this case a large one) embraced between them.

The head-springs are located upon the southern slope of the Welsh Mountain, about seven miles distant the one from the other. The streams approach each other until a tract of high land only three miles in width interposes; they then diverge to a distance of six miles or more, and gradually approach, until they unite near Wawasset, approximately twenty-five miles from their sources.

The land embraced in the "Forks" is chiefly agricultural, though much diversified. Some sections are hilly, and there is considerable woodland. The altitude varies from three hundred and fifty feet in the Great Valley to over eight hundred feet on the slope of the Welsh Mountain. The country is well-watered and very fertile.

The church is located on a hill, about one mile from the west and four miles from the east branch. It is "beautiful for situation," commanding a prospect of great extent. The building is a recognized landmark, visible from the mountain beyond Honey Brook and from the heights around Joanna.

IT IS not accurately known when the first settlements were made within "The Forks," but the date must be placed very early in the eighteenth century. It is probable that the first settlers came from the Pequea Valley and from the headwaters of the Octorara. They were, in large majority, Scottish and Scotch-Irish. In pursuance of the policy of the Penns, these aggressive people had pushed out beyond the Quaker settlements, to form primitive buffer-state communities between these and the Indians—who, notwithstanding their cordiality toward the Friends, were always problematical.

However, by 1724 a scattered population had established itself in the locality, and a tentative attempt was made to institute public worship. The recently organized Octorara Church regarded these settlers as members of that congregation, and in the Autumn of 1724, an open-air service was held at or near the present site of the church, at which the Rev. Adam Boyd is said, with much probability, to have been the preacher; although it may be that the Rev. Mr. Evans, pastor of the Great Valley congregation, officiated.

Such services were held from time to time during the ensuing years. Private homes, primitive as they were, must have been for the most part the places of meeting, with open-air worship when this was practicable; and in 1734 a petition was addressed to the Presbytery of Donegal, craving permission to build a meeting house, the better to enjoy "the ministrations of Mr. Boyd."

The petition was duly granted, but a misunderstanding arose. The people believed that with leave to build, the Presbytery had also erected them into a new congregation. Apparently the difficulty was adjusted without serious friction, and Mr. Boyd ministered to the flock for about two years.

On the 15th of 1735 (O.S.), a petition was presented to the Presbytery of Donegal, requesting that the people of "The Forks of Brandywine" be erected into a distinct congregation. Several matters, however, required adjustment. The Presbytery complained of "bad treatment," but was placated by an apology, and the request was finally granted; and the congregation entered upon its career as an independent ecclesiastical entity.

It is noteworthy that the corporate name of the church is little known and never publicly used. The popular name is "Brandywine Manor." In the Minutes of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, the name is "Forks of Brandywine." But the charter bearing the date of 1786 uses as the name, "The Presbyterian Congregation of Brandywine."

Differences seem to have arisen between Mr. Boyd and some of the people, and as a result he was not continued, or formally called, as pastor. With the consent of Presbytery, some "young gentleman from Ireland, recently arrived," were sought after, and of these Mr. Samuel Black was finally called, and duly installed as pastor on November 10, 1736.

This was a time of trouble. The differences which resulted in the schism of 1741 were already apparent, and ill-feeling and bitterness increased as the contestants, with imprudent zeal, pressed their views. Elements were involved which made the contention peculiarly reprehensible. On the one hand the advocates of revivalism too often transgressed the law of love by their judgment of those who differed with them; and their intrusion upon the fields of other ministers, on the plea that "the people perish for lack of knowledge" of spiritual things, cannot readily be condoned. On the other hand, it seems clear that many of the churches had fallen into a very low state of grace and activity, and this many of the ministers refused to recognize. The revivalists, following the heavenly wisdom, might have brought great blessing to the Church; the conserva-

tives, by the practice of moderation and charity, and by a frank recognition of certain vital needs, might have preserved peace. But the spirit of contention was rife, and in anger and bitterness the Church was rent asunder, and for seventeen years "New Side" and "Old Side" stood militantly arrayed against each other.

A majority of the congregation of the Forks of Brandywine embraced the cause of the "New Side." The conservatives, however, retained possession of the log church when the division transpired. Their opponents purchased a lot east of the old church, and there erected a good frame meeting-house, and established a cemetery, which is still maintained. They called to the pastorate the Rev. William Dean, a young Irishman of large ability and deeppiety, who labored here successfully for about three years, and then passed to his reward. The "Old Side" congregation continued under the pastoral care of Mr. Black.

But the spirit of contention could not be excluded even from this conservative church. Dissensions arose, accusations of unministerial conduct were made against the pastor, and after some indefinite presbyterial action the relation was dissolved in July, 1741. It appears that the definite charges against Mr. Black were not, in the judgment of Presbytery, sustained; but it seems probable that his usefulness was at an end, and that the relation was dissolved in the interest of the peace of the congregation.

The "New Side" people never again enjoyed the services of a settled pastor. For reasons now unknown, several ministers to whom calls were extended declined to accept. Of the spiritual condition of the church, and of its influence upon the community, no indications exist. The historian of the original church infers from the character of Mr. Dean that the congregation was "prosperous." But as the controversy abated, it appears that a number left the pastorless church, and returned to their former allegiance.

After the reunion in 1758 the building was no longer used for purposes of worship. It was finally removed to another site, and was destroyed by a violent storm. No trace remains, but the cemetery is maintained by the present church, and is in good condition. The oldest stone is that of Mr. Dean, 1748; the latest interment was in 1907.

The Rev. Adam Boyd, well known to the congregation, was invited to become the pastor of the minority party which occupied the original building. The relation continued until October, 1758, when it was dissolved, according to the incomplete records, "in a very irregular manner." This is surprising, in view of the fact that the membership was largely increased during this pastorate. No explanation can be found, and it may be surmised that the agitation incident to the Great Schism had not wholly subsided, and that Mr. Boyd was not acceptable to those who had returned from the "New Side" church. The pulpit remained vacant until September, 1761, when the Rev. John Carmichael was installed as pastor.

Mr. Carmichael was a native of Scotland, coming to America with his parents in early boyhood. Brave and venturesome, he narrowly escaped death during the voyage. In young manhood, under the deep convictions of the Holy Spirit, he sought and obtained an experience of regeneration definite and conscious, and in the strength of that baptism he entered into an active service which was to end only with his life. His zeal for the salvation of the ungodly was constant and intense. "Instant in season and out of season," his exhortations, prayers, and labors were instrumental in winning many souls. His last words breathed out the passion of his spirit, "O that I had a thousand tongues, that I might employ them all in leading sinners to Christ!"

A great task confronted the newly installed minister and his people. The log church had in the course of more than a quarter-century become unfit for use. Never adequate, it was now far too small to accommodate the grow-

ing congregation. Plans for a suitable sanctuary were promptly prepared, and soon the cornerstone of a great building was laid. The house, when finished, was the largest stone structure in Chester County. Although the original plan was not brought to full fruitation, the new temple was dedicated about 1762, amid great rejoicing. Its stately walls adorned the hill of the Lord for more than a century.

This ministry was set in troublous times. Mr. Carmichael is remembered as the "Revolutionary Pastor." In the year of his installation the first stirrings of the conflict between the Colonies and the mother country were felt. Possessed of the traditional Presbyterian hatred of tyranny and love of freedom, he cast his lot whole-heartedly with the cause of America. When war came, he supported it actively, preaching before Congress, present at the Battle of Long Island, urging enlistments until he had sent practically all his able-bodied parishioners into the army, carryin supplies to the camps, counseling with Washington, and throwing the whole weight of his great influence into the scale of liberty.

Warned of an impending British raid, he hid with his family in the wooded hills, but was soon again in his place. Whether this raid was identical with the one in which the boy John Gilliland was murdered, or simply a false alarm, is not known.

The sound of cannonading at the Fords of the Brandywine was distinctly heard in this neighborhood. The day was one of terror. The dread noises of battle miles away came up the valley and echoed among the hills. Women and children stood in the doorways, weeping and praying; for there was scarcely a home which had not sent forth some loved one to bear arms for freedom. Tidings of defeat increased the apprehension of the people. But the enemy made no advance in force. One raid, and the brief presense of British scouts near Downingtown, made up the sum of invasion.

Mr. Carmichael lived to see the independence of his country acknowledged by the British government. He was active in Christian service until within a few days of his death. Exposure to a heavy rain brought on illness which ended his nobly strenuous life, on November 15, 1785, in the fifty-eighth year of his age.

Summing up the work and character of this man of God, Mr. W. W. MacElree says: "Such virtues as John Carmichael possessed, such energy and faithfulness, such wisdom and tact, such absolute adoption of the Eleventh Commandment as the cardinal rule of his life, would be sufficient to sweeten and illuminate any page of ecclesiastical history Caln and Nantmeal . . . can never forget him; their hills and valleys were 'the witnesses of his ardent devotion when living, and still retain his memory with unshaken fidelity'."

Within a year from the death of its pastor, the congregation suffered a further calamity in the destruction of its sanctuary. The primitive heating apparatus of the day was responsible for the fire, and superstition conspired to complete the disaster. The sexton, who was a believer in ghosts (locally and to this day popularly known as "spooks"), saw the flickering light, and had he acted promptly, could have saved the church. But he was terrified at the thought of spirit-activities; and when finally he realized the situation, the fire was beyond control.

Here was tribulation indeed. Money was scarce. The whole financial structure of the nation was insecure. The aftermath of war was manifest in a deadened spiritual condition. Without a pastor, without a place of worship, the congregation might readily have become discouraged to the point of dissolution. But these Presbyterians were made of sterner stuff.

Immediately the work of restoration was begun. It was discovered that for the most part the walls were intact. Great efforts were made to raise funds—at such a time a very difficult matter. But there seems to have been a gen-

eral response to the appeal sent out by the Session, and to the personal solicitations of influential members. It is recorded that Elder William Hunter visited every house within a radius of many miles and shunned not to request contributions from travelers on the highways. Men notable in the history of the Republic are known to have given aid—Benjamin Franklin, Doctor Rush, David Rittenhouse, Edward Shippen, William Bradford, and others. The necessary amount—something over 1000 pounds, Pennsylvania currency—was finally raised, and the restored building was dedicated shortly after the installation of the new pastor, the Rev. Nathan Grier.

Mr. Grier was installed by the Presbytery of New Castle, on August 22, 1787, and continued in this ministry until his death in 1814. It appears that the work of Christ in the community was rapidly enlarging in its scope. The parish was very extensive, comprising the territory now occupied by the Coatesville, Downingtown, Fairview, and Honey Brook Churches. Mr. Grier actively performed the duties of this great field, visiting all homes, catechising the children, counseling, consoling, exhorting, seeking the lost. In addition to his regular work, he established in his home (a house still standing about a mile and a half from the church), a theological seminary, in which about twenty young men were prepared for the ministry of the Gospel.

To quote from the "History of the Brandywine Manor Presbyterian Church": "The following synopsis of the course pursued by the students under the supervision of Mr. Grier is from the pen of the most eminent of his pupils, the Rev. Dr. McConaughy:

"Those who studied under his direction were accustomed to divide their time between the study of the Scriptures, Ecclesiastical History, and a series of questions about One Hundred in number, in the usual order of the system of Theology. On these questions they were required to write pretty fully, and submit the result to his examination and criticism. In like manner they composed sermons, on which

they had his opinion as to matter and style."

The noble work of Mr. Grier was brought to an unexpected end. After a brief illness he passed to his rest on March 30, 1814, in his fifty-fourth year.

This able minister of the New Testament was in a peculiar sense a sower of the seed of the Kingdom—a sowing which brought rich harvest in the following years. In the good providence of God, the spiritual apathy which followed the war—the indifference to the claims of Christ, the influence of French skepticism—was soon to yield to the manifested power of the Spirit of God. Mr. Grier did not live to see those days of the right hand of the Most High; but it was his great joy to witness the conversion of his son, John Nathan Caldwell Grier, whom the Lord designed to be his honored father's successor, and during whose ministry the heavens poured out floods of divine and saving power and grace.

This richly gifted man, the third child in a family of five, united with his father's church in 1810, at the age of eighteen. In a sermon preached toward the end of his pastorate, he vividly portrays his spiritual struggles while under the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and the fulness of his consecration to the Lord when he had come to realize his place in the everlasting covenant. He soon began to prepare for the Christian ministry, and before the death of his father was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Castle. And when the venerable pastor was taken to his eternal reward, this son of his love and child of the church was called to take up the work of his father, and in this work he continued for the great span of fifty-four years and six months.

The sermon referred to incidentally portrays the character and influence of the early Presbyterian home. This youth was reared in an atmosphere of piety and devotion, and was early taught the great facts, not only of Christian doctrine, but of Christian experience. Like many others,

he was a boy of prayer, but was necertheless conscious of his vital need of a Saviour from sin. So, when the Holy Ghost gave him the grace of conviction, he could immediately recognize the Spirit's working. His inward conflicts were severe, and his repentance deep; and the assurance of his salvation in Christ, once possessed, was correspondingly profound and satisfying. His whole life and ministry impress us with a sense of certitude, of unwavering faith, of entire consecration.

Doctor Grier was installed as pastor of the Forks of Brandywine Church on November 24, 1814. The record of the first seven years is one of faithful preaching and pastoral service; but in these years there was no outstanding manifestation of divine power. Then we find a notation, in the handwriting of Doctor Grier, which states that in 1822 "there was a revival in this congregation . . . when forty-two members were received into the church."

In 1831 came another awakening, and more than seventy persons confessed Christ as their Saviour, and were admitted to the sealing ordinances. Soon after, other accessions raised the number to one hundred and five. Later in the year a considerable number were received. On October 5, 1832, eighty-four were admitted, and a year later, seventy-one. In 1834 witnessed the reception of fifty-eight, and thirty-six were received in 1836.

There is some discrepancy between these figures (taken from the dated records) and those of a synopsis given under date of March 26, 1849. This record follows:

"Again, a revival commenced here A. D. 1831, when 127 were received into the church.

In 1832, 92 were received
In 1833, 74 were added
In 1874, 47 were added
In 1848, 17 were added

It would appear that it was during this pastorate that the church, passing from the pioneer period, definitely

assumed the character which it maintains today. The tradition then established is still powerfully influential. Rigid conservatism in doctrine, ordered worship, loyalty to the Presbyterian system, earnest but reverent envangelism—these are the outstanding features of the life of this congregation. Seriousness and dignity mark all public services. The lightness and frivolity found in many modern religious gatherings are wholly absent.

The decade of 1830-1840 witnessed the organization of the "Daughter Churches," three of which were erected during that period, or immediately after it. The first of these was the Presbyterian Church of Coatesville. A considerable number of the members of the Forks of Brandywine joined with those of the Doe Run Church to establish this new enterprise in the growing borough. Following this movement, those who resided in the western portion of the parish were constituted as the Waynesburg Presbyterian Church, in November, 1835—one century after the formal erection of the Mother Church.

No schism or "split" was involved in the organization of these churches. The crowded condition of the original church, and the consideration of convenience, together with the holy desire to extend the work of the Lord, dictated the movements. They have been fully justified by the successes of the years. The Coatesville Church is at this day the largest in membership in the Presbytery of Chester; and the Waynesburg Church (now known as Honey Brook), though not so large as the Forks of Brandywine, is a sound and vigorous society.

In 1839-40, however, a division took place which differed so radically from the others that more than a passing reference is demanded.

The early years of the 19th Century were distinguished by a serious and aggressive effort to restrict the sale and use of intoxicants, and particularly to free the churches from the almost universal practice of drinking. To this end temperance societies were formed, which exercised an ever-widening influence. Such a society was organized in

this neighborhood, in 1831, largely through the agency of Doctor Grier; and the minister prosecuted its work with zeal, in and out of the pulpit; to the discomfiture of certain of his parishioners who were engaged in the manufacture of ardent spirit.

After some disciplinary measures instituted by the Session, these members withdrew from the communion of the mother church, and in 1840 were organized as the West Nantmeal Presbyterian Church. The influence of Doctor Grier, who seems to have militantly opposed the movement, prevented the new congregation from entering the Old School body, and the church was received into the fold of New School Presbyterianism.

At a letter date the name of the church was changed to "Fairview," by which title it is now known. Unhappily, the peculiar conditions which attended its institution gave rise to a designation popular with "certain fellows of the baser sort."—the "Whiskey Church."

In the providence of God, this church has been powerfully instrumental in remolding the character of its neighborhood. The country north of the Brandywine was at one time a place of religious vagary and of indifferent living. A Morman movement, and sects even less reputable, appeared there. But the influence of the church has transformed the community, and for nearly a century the once forbidding section has been one of the most decent and religious in the entire county.

In 1861, after an unsuccessful effort, the Central Presbyterian Church of Downingtown, was organized. This congregation was largely made up of the members of the Forks of Brandywine. The work of Christ has been prospered, and the membership has been greatly enlarged.

Sunday Schools were early organized in the territory of the Forks of Brandywine. At Rockville, three miles west of the church, the first school was instituted, in 1820. This work continued, with intervals of inertia, until within recent years. A permanent organization was effected in the church in 1828. In later years schools were organized in Martin's

Corner and at the Friendship schoolhouse. Of these two, the school at Martin's Corner is still in operation, and though officered by members of the church, is not officially connected with it.

During the pastorate of Doctor Grier, the missionary spirit which has long inspired this congregation found expression in the organization of a society. Impetus was thus given to the work of spreading the Gospel in distant lands—an impetus which continues to this day.

But the outstanding feature of the long pastorate of this remarkable man was, the almost uninterrupted gathering of souls into the fold of Christ. It would appear that for years the community was in a state of revival, and scarcely a communion service passed without witnessing the reception on confession of faith of those who had been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Full of years and honors, encompassed by the love of his people, Doctor Grier resigned his pastorate in April, 1869, terminating a service of more than fifty-four years. He continued to reside in the home which he had erected near the church, until, after eleven years, he peacefully passed into the presence of the Lord.

With the installation of the succeeding pastor, the Rev. W. W. Heberton, we enter upon familiar ground. This man of God, who but a few years since entered into heavenly rest, was a familiar figure to the men of this generation. Mr. Heberton was ordained and installed in October, 1869, and remained in the pastorate for three years—a marked contrast to the long period of service preceding.

During this incumbency, the manse and the outbuildings pertaining thereto were erected. The house, a frame structure of ten rooms and an attic, was afterward improved by the addition of modern conveniences. The barn was also of frame construction, and was very adequately equiped for its purposes.

After resigning the pulpit of the Forks of Brandywine Church, Doctor Heberton served as the Church of Elkton, Maryland, and other congregations, until he became identified with the Board of Ministerial Relief, in which connection he continued until a few years before his death in 1933. He was succeeded by the Rev. John McColl, who was ordained and installed in July, 1873.

The salient feature of Doctor McColl's very successful pastorate was the erection of the present church building.

It is doubtful that the claim that the old house was unsafe, was well-founded. Nevertheless, after much discussion, it was determined to destroy the ancient sanctuary, and build anew. While many felt and expressed deep sorrow in parting with the church of their fathers, with great unanimity and earnestness the congregation accepted the task before them. A sum of money of encouraging size having been secured, the old building was demolished, and the new cornerstone was laid on the 7th of August, 1875. The work, however, was hindered by weather conditions and by certain adverse happenings. It is said that the contractor "gave up" the project; but there are traditions which indicate a sinister condition with respect to this "giving-up." Be this as it may, it became necessary to modify the plans to an extent, so that the building as it stands is smaller than at first contemplated. The service of dedication was held in December, 1876, and the church was consecrated free of debt. However, the spire provided for in the original plan was not completed for several years thereafter.

This is the third sanctuary. A few stones, laid in regular order, recently uncovered by a storm of rain, are all that remain of the second church. A few years ago, the sexton, digging a grave, came upon a half-hewn log, perhaps two feet beneath the surface. This is thought to have been a remnant of the original house erected in 1734. The log could not be removed, and was covered again.

The passing of the venerable Doctor Grier, on September 5, 1880, cast a profound gloom over the entire community. Since his retirement the aged minister had occupied the house which he had built in 1842, within sight of the church. As his health permitted, he had joined in the worship of the people whom he ever regarded as his spiritual sons and daughters. At the ripe aged of eighty-two he passed peacefully away. His remains were interred in the main cemetery. His epitaph reads, "His witness is in Heaven, His record is on high."

The pastorate of Doctor McColl continued until January 1, 1888. The entire period was rich in blessing. A gracious revival resulted in the addition of forty-seven members. On September 24, 1885, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the organizzation of the church was fittingly celebrated.

After an interval of some months, the congregation extended a call to the Rev. Hector Alexander McLean, who was installed on November 15, 1888, and who continued in the pastoral office for twenty-five years. Some of the features of this quarter-century administration deserve special notice.

Spiritually, there were seasons of great refreshing. In 1892 the noted evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, conducted a series of meetings in Coatesville, and on an occasion visited this church and preached. Fifty-six persons were admitted to membership as a result of these services. In 1908 the presbyterial evangelist, the Rev. Henry Faulconer, conducted a special meeting, with gracious results. Twenty-six persons entered the church. At this time the total membership is believed to have numbered about three hundred active communicants.

The material things kept pace with the spiritual. Many improvements to the property date from this period. The spire, rising to the height of about one hundred feet, was completed—a landmark visible for many miles. A memorial

bell of rich tone was hung in the belfry. The fence of wooden palings which surrounded the churchyard was replaced by a spbstantial stone wall with impressive gateways, and new portals of similar design were opened in the cemetery wall. The two burial grounds were placed in excellent order, and large improvements were made in the manse.

The one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the church was impressively celebrated on October 1, 1910. On this occasion no sermons seem to have been preached, but the pastor delivered an extensive historical address, and greetings from the four "Daughter Churches," and "reminiscences" given by former pastors, with the reading of the Scriptures, prayer, and singing, comprised the programme. A great company was present.

From this time the records of the church seem to have been imperfectly kept. Apparently death made many inroads upon the membership, and the number of communicants was materially decreased. The pastor was deeply afflicted by the loss of his daughter, a child of much promise, and peculiarly near to his heart. From the shock of this bereavement he never wholly recovered.

In the early months of 1913 it became painfully apparent that the pastor was seriously threatened with a nervous breakdown. In order that he might be for a time relieved from the pressure of his labors, the Session secured the services of Mr. H. H. Kurtz, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Chester, who occupied the pulpit and in a limited sense performed pastoral duties, for about nine months. But the hopes of the congregation, that rest would restore their beloved pastor, were not to be realized. A short rally was followed by a period of increasing weakness and distress, and on January 31, 1914, the pastoral relation was formally dissolved. Mr. McLean lingered in a state of mental derangement until April 19, 1917, and then entered into rest. His memory is cherished by his people unto this day.

A considerable interval elapsed before the church was sufficiently united to call a pastor; but after a number of

candidates had appeared, the congregation extended a call to the Rev. H. Medley Price, a former minister of the Reformed Episcopal Church, who at some previous time had entered the Presbyterian ministry. Mr. Price was installed on April 30, 1915, inaugurating the shortest pastorate in the history of the church.

Mr. Price was a preacher of large ability, and the integrity of his life commanded general respect. But his training and experience had been largely upon urban lines; and the congregation, accustomed for a quarter-century to the conservative ways of Mr. McLean, could not heartily respond to the somewhat aggressive plans and aims of their pastor. Failing, as he himself said, to inspire the church with his vision of service (a vision, indeed, comprehending things impracticable to a conservative rural church), he tendered his resignation, and the pastoral relation was dissolved by Presbytery on June 1, 1917.

At this time, nevertheless, considerable advance was made upon material lines. A very fine Estey pipe organ was donated to the church, new carpet was laid in the auditorium, and new pulpit furniture installed. A movement was set on foot to replace the large but somewhat antiquated sheds with better and handsomer ones. The advent of the automobile, however, rendered this unnecessary, and the plan was abandoned.

Again the congregation found itself unable to decide promptly upon a pastor. Candidates were heard, and supplies employed, but nearly two years elapsed before a permanent settlement could be made. At length a call was extended to the Rev. Michael B. Bubb, and by him accepted; and he was duly installed in the pastoral office on April 29, 1919.

The aftermath of war, the inroads of death, and the tendency to remove to the towns and cities, now visibly affected the congregation. Attendance declined in the church and Sabbath school, and the outlying schools at

Martin's Corner and Friendship were definitely abandoned. The school at Rockville continued, in reduced numbers, but it became increasingly difficult to secure workers for these fields. A union organization took up the work at Martin's Corner, and this ceased to be a preaching station. The Christian Endeavor Society of the church no longer functioned, thus ending all services on Sabbath evenings. Spiritual apathy seemed to affect all the churches of the community.

In the spring of 1923 Mr. Bubb was prostrated by serious illness. After a period of slow convalescence, his sense of duty impelled him to deliver an address to the Sabbath School on the Children's Day occasion. A relapse followed, and after some days of suffering he passed into the better life, on June 26, 1923.

The Session immediately took measures to supply the pulpit. Mr. Kurtz, who had been employed in 1913, and who had been ordained to the Gospel ministry in 1916, was temporarily engaged. Such, however, was the appreciation of his work that the congregation extended to him a unanimous call, and he was installed as pastor on February 8, 1924.

At this time the communicant membership of the church numbered 189. But in the gracious providence of God, an event transpired which was destined powerfully to affect the entire community.

In the summer of 1924, Mr. C. L. Huston, an elder of the Coatesville Presbyterian Church, conferred with the officials of the Martin's Corner Sabbath School (a chapel having been erected in the village) with the view of holding a series of special services there. There was a cordial response; and a Mr. Samples, a wise and able evangelist, was secured. The Holy Spirit came upon the gatherings with great power. The chapel could not accommodate the throngs that came to hear the word. It is believed that nearly one hundred persons sought the pardon of their sins, and the whole neighborhood was quickened in its spiritual life.

The churchw as wholly sympathetic with this work, and to a very large extent shared its blessings. A majority of the converts united with the established congregation. Some of the most active and useful members of this day were brought to Christ in this revival. So many surrendered to Christ and confessed His Name that the membership of the church rose, in a few years, to the number of 415. A rigorous pruning of the roll reduced this number to about 350. But the spiritual impetus of the days of revival persisted; and the Holy Ghost has so continued the work that in the face of considerable loss through removal and death, the membership now stands at about 380.

This pastorate has witnessed an unusual number of anniversaries. In October, 1924, the bi-centennial of the first service was celebrated with a primitive form of worship—the singing of Psalms to ancient tunes, the "Long Prayer" (the people standing), the exposition, and the sermon. On this occasion the minister, for the first time, wore the Geneva Gown.

In 1926 the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the present sanctuary was observed, and in 1928 the centennial of the organization of the Sabbath School. A salient feature of this celebration was the presence of representatives of most of the Sabbath Schools of the neighborhood.

On the last Sabbath of September, 1935, the congregation observed the two hundredth anniversary of its founding. A great multitude gathered, filling the rooms of both floors. A microphone conveyed the service of the upper sanctuary to those in the lower room. The sermon was delivered by the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D. D., and neighboring pastors assisted in the service. In the afternoon a primitive Presbyterian service was held, with a sermon by the Rev. Wilbur Smith, D. D., and an exposition by the Rev. Herbert Kann. The evening was occupied with an historical service, in which the Rev. Philip Miller, Ph. D., delivered the address. Meetings of varied character were held

throughout the following week, and a sacramental service ended the occasion on the first Sabbath of October.

In the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the recent years, this congregation, though deeply resentful of the conduct of the General Assembly toward the members of the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and jealously on guard against an infringement of its liberties, nevertheless firmly retained its tradition of loyalty to the Presbyterian Church. It supported the Westminster Theological Seminary until that institution identified itself with another denomination, and for a time, on account of certain publications, refused to support the Board of Christian Education. In view of some tendencies manifested by the Assembly and the Synod, it maintains a certain aloofness; but its position as a faithful congregation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is unquestioned.

Proximity forbids an estimate of the present work and influence of the church. Only the perspective of time can give this. An enumeration of the general activities is all that can here be attempted.

The condition of the church property is such that changes and additions would be superfluous. One outstanding work, however, has been the transforming of a storage basement into an adequate social room.

The services are, the Sabbath School, the morning and evening worship, the Young Peoples' Meeting and Bible Study, the "Four Days" evangelistic meeting, the quarterly sacramental occasions, with the accompanying preparatory services. Evening worship is discontinued during the winter months, but all other activities are continued throughout the year.

In the public worship, the ancient tradition of dignity and reverence is fully maintained. In the administration of the Lord's Supper a modified liturgy is employed; but in other services the simplicity of Presbyterian worship is

cherished. With the incoming of a new hymnal, responsive readings and the "amen" were introduced, and later, a call to worship. Apart from these somewhat minor features, the worship is as it was fifty years ago.

The organizations are: the Sabbath School, the Missionary Society, the Ladies' Aid, the Young Peoples' Evangelical Association, the Light Bearers, the Senior and Junior Choirs, and the Boys' Christian League. A Girls' Mission band is connected with one of the classes of the Sabbath School. A Troop of the Boy Pioneers of Pennsylvania meets in the lecture room, but is not officially connected with the church.

It is inevitable that a church which has existed in uninterrupted activity for two hundred and eight years should be held in reverence by the community which it has served. The Presbyterian Church of the Forks of Brandywine, for its great age, its faithful witness, the integrity of its officiary, and its unflinching loyalty to the truth as it is in Jesus, commands the veneration of the whole section which lies within the bounds of its Presbytery. Although churches representing all the greater denominations have been erected near it since the time of its first founding, it is still the "Mother Church."

The long and honorable history of this Church of the Living God, as compared with the average life of the city church, would seem to indicate that the oft-mentioned "problem of the rural church" is less pressing and vital than that of the urban congregation. While great churches in the cities, full of promise, have run their course and vanished in the compass of fifty or sixty years, the meed of greater stability must be given to the church of the country. Changing populations are held acountable for the passing of many city churches; but it is doubtful that this is the only explanation. Undoubtedly the more settled conditions of the rural districts make for permanence. But the most powerfully sustaining element must be the firmer adherence to the faith once delivered to the saints. Modern

skepticism is not popular in the country; and while in these latter days there is less knowledge of Christian doctrine than once obtained, in most country congregations the people are able to distinguish the false from the true. The mighty influence of that word which though heaven and earth pass, shall not pass away, is still powerful in the rural communities; and the general acceptance of that truth, with its practical applications, has sustained the churches in the wider spaces, while many apparently more eligibly situated have vanished away. If it were possible to sum up the factors which perpetuate the country church, the result would be, faith in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the all-sufficient Saviour of men.